

Prevention

Preventing spills is Washington's first line of defense.

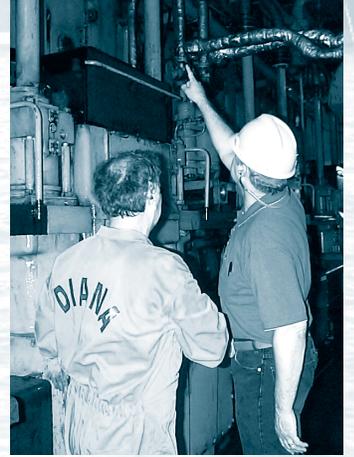


Prevention is the primary mission of the Department of Ecology's Spills Program. Preventing spills involves:

- ◆ **Vessel Screening** - Vessels entering Washington waters are screened for potential environmental risks.
- ◆ **Vessel Inspection** - Inspectors board commercial ships and work with officers and crewmembers to evaluate and reduce the risk to the public and the environment.
- ◆ **Bunker Monitoring (Refueling)** - Inspectors check procedures and equipment to reduce the potential for spills during fuel transfers. Any refueling facility must develop an oil handling Training and Certification Program for operators involved in oil transfers.

◆ **Investigations** - Investigating accidents, spills, near-spills and near-miss incidents provides lessons in prevention, assists in assessing and recovering damage costs, and supports enforcement actions.

◆ **Oil-handling Facilities** - Facilities must develop spill prevention plans and procedures and submit them to the Department of Ecology for review and approval.



Preparedness

Being well prepared results in a confident, successful spill response.



The *Spill Preparedness Section* works with oil spill contingency plan holders and response contractors as they plan, design and conduct oil spill drills. They also review and approve oil spill contingency plans. Preparing for spills involves:

- ◆ **Drills** - Plan holders have a three year cycle to demonstrate the effectiveness of their plans, using deployment and tabletop drills. These drills are evaluated by Ecology, and changes are required if deficiencies are noted. Ecology uses unannounced drills to prevent complacency.
- ◆ **Contingency Plans** - A contingency plan is required by all oil handling facilities and large vessels in Washington. The plan describes the oil spill response actions necessary to effectively and efficiently respond to an oil spill. Oil-handling facilities and vessel plan holders, including oil tankers and barges, must possess

oil-spill contingency plans approved by Ecology in order to operate in Washington.

- ◆ **Geographic Response Plans** - These plans identify strategies to protect specific natural resources for a particular area. This planning takes the guesswork out of the response during the first twelve hours of a spill.
- ◆ **Response Contractors** - Plan holders must hire response contractors approved by Ecology. During the approval process, Ecology inspects the equipment and readiness of the contractor's personnel.
- ◆ **Interagency Coordination** - Ecology works with states and provinces along the West Coast to ensure a consistent approach to spill prevention and response.
- ◆ **Education and Outreach** - Ecology educates, informs and advises interested parties about spill prevention and response.

Response

Rapid spill response helps minimize damage to the environment.



The *Spill Response Section* is committed to responding quickly and effectively, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to anything that poses an immediate threat to public health or the environment. Responding to a spill involves:

- ◆ **24-hour Statewide Response** - Ecology provides 24-hour emergency response to oil and hazardous material spills that pose a risk to public health and safety and the environment.
- ◆ **Compliance and Enforcement** - Once an oil spill occurs, Ecology can take a wide range of enforcement and compliance actions, including administrative orders, field citations, penalties, and cost recovery of all response costs incurred by the state.

◆ **Cleanup Oversight** - As the state natural-resource trustee during an oil spill, Ecology ensures that the responsible party is acting properly and promptly to clean up the spill and fully protect the environment.

- ◆ **Illegal Drug Lab Cleanup** - Ecology is responsible for responding to clandestine drug laboratories at the request of local law enforcement. Responders remove and dispose of chemicals, equipment and wastes used or generated in the production of illegal drugs.
- ◆ **Education and Outreach** - Ecology works with local communities to develop or enhance their ability to respond to incidents involving hazardous materials. Responders participate on Local Emergency Planning Committees and train with local response organizations to build response capabilities across the state.

Natural Resource Damage Assessment

By law, oil spillers must repair the environmental damage they cause.



The Natural Resource Damage Assessment Committee determines the cost of damages to the environment in a spill.



When oil is spilled into state waters, the responsible party must pay the state for damage caused to natural resources. Ecology's Natural Resource Damage Assessment staff works with other agencies and responsible parties to determine damages, recover costs and restore the environment. Assessments are based on volume, oil type, and sensitivity of the environment damaged by the spill. Damage assessment can take various shapes:

- ◆ Assessments can be monetary.
- ◆ In lieu of payment, the party responsible for a spill may develop and implement a restoration project.
- ◆ Cash payments are deposited in the Coastal Protection Fund and may be used for a variety of restoration projects.

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If you require this publication in an alternative format, please contact the Spills Program at (360) 407-7455 (Voice) or (TTY) at 711 or 1-800-833-6388.

Washington Department of Ecology
Spill Prevention, Preparedness, and Response Program
PO Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

Washington State Department of Ecology

Spills Program

Report ALL oil and hazardous material spills immediately to 800-OILS 911 or 800-258-5990
Division of Emergency Management AND 800-424-8802
U.S.C.G./National Response Center
Anytime of day - 7 days a week



WASHINGTON STATE
DEPARTMENT OF
E C O L O G Y

SPILL PREVENTION, PREPAREDNESS, AND RESPONSE PROGRAM

A spill by any other name might also involve meth labs, hazardous waste, pesticides or other harmful substances.

